

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

first load bearing means mounted to the frame and adapted to receive lifting means;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum; [[and]]

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member; and

second load bearing means mounted to the exertion member and adapted to receive lifting means;

wherein the lower end of each lifting arm is adapted not to contact the article in a retracted position and to contact the article in an engaged position.

wherein upon application of upward force to the first load bearing means the lifting apparatus may be lifted, in the absence of other mechanical means mounted to the lifting apparatus, with the lifting arms in the retracted position,

wherein in the absence of the application of external force to the second load bearing means the lifting arms are in the retracted position, and

wherein upon application of upward force to the second load bearing means the lifting arms rotate around the corresponding fulcrum from the retracted position to the engaged position.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 1, wherein the exertion member engages the upper ends of the lifting arms in a manner selected from the group consisting of sliding engagement and rolling engagement.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The lifting apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least two lifting arms each comprise an approximately vertical portion outside of the frame mounted to an approximately horizontal portion extending outward from the exertion member to the upper end of the respective vertical portions, the lifting arms have various positions, and the approximately vertical portion remains approximately vertical and the approximately horizontal portion remains approximately horizontal throughout the various positions.

Claim 5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (currently amended): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum;

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member; and

[[first]] load bearing means mounted to the frame and adapted to receive lifting means, wherein the [[first]] load bearing means includes:

at least two vertical members mounted to the frame at their lower ends and on opposite sides of the frame;

a horizontal member mounted to the upper ends of the vertical members;

and

a lifting eye mounted to the horizontal member.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum, wherein the at least two lifting arms each include an approximately vertical portion outside of the frame mounted to an approximately horizontal portion extending outward from the exertion member to the upper end of the respective vertical portions;

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member; and

vertical posts mounted to and on top of the exertion member, one vertical post mounted to each sloped portion of the exertion member, wherein the horizontal portions of the at least two lifting arms each include a vertical slot therethrough, and wherein each vertical post extends through and is slidably disposed in a corresponding vertical slot in the horizontal portion of each lifting arm.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The lifting apparatus of claim 7, further comprising ~~second~~ load bearing means mounted to the vertical posts and adapted to receive lifting means.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The lifting apparatus of claim 8, wherein the ~~second~~ load bearing means comprises a lifting eye mounted to horizontal parts that are mounted to the upper ends of the at least two vertical posts.

Claim 10 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 7, further comprising grippers mounted to the lower end of each lifting arm and each including a gripping surface proximate to the article.

Claim 11 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 10, wherein there are at least three lifting arms, at least three vertical posts, and at least three grippers.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A lifting apparatus comprising:

- a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame, wherein the frame includes:

- a substantially planar and horizontally oriented base including an outside edge proximate to the article's outside edge;

- vertical uprights including a lower end mounted to and distributed in spaced relation about the base; and

- a ring in a horizontal plane mounted to the upper end of the uprights and connecting adjacent uprights;

- at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum; and

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member.

Claim 13 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 12, wherein the outside edge of the base is circular in the horizontal plane.

Claim 14 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 12, wherein the base comprises connected linear members.

Claim 15 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 12, wherein the outside edge of the ring is circular in the horizontal plane.

Claim 16 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 12, wherein the ring comprises connected linear members.

Claim 17 (original): The lifting apparatus of claim 1, further comprising guide members mounted to the frame for aligning the frame on the article.

Claim 18 (original): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on a cylinder to be lifted having a generally central and substantially vertical axis, the frame including:

a substantially planar and horizontally oriented base having an outside edge proximate to the cylinder's outside edge;

vertical uprights including a lower end mounted to and distributed in spaced relation about the base;

at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame and extending outward with respect to the central axis; and

a ring in a horizontal plane mounted to the upper end of the uprights and connecting adjacent uprights;

first load bearing means mounted to the frame and adapted to receive lifting means;

a lifting assembly comprising:

at least two lifting arms, distributed around the frame and each including an approximately vertical portion outside of the frame and being pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each with a lower end that extends lower than the base, and each with an approximately horizontal portion extending radially from a central end proximate to the axis and above the ring and mounted to the upper end of the respective vertical portions, the horizontal portion having a vertical slot therethrough;

grippers mounted to the vertical portion of the lifting arms below the base, including a gripping surface proximate to the cylinder, and having a retracted

position with the gripping surface not in contact with the cylinder and an engaged position with the gripping surface in contact with the cylinder;

a central exertion member including a top surface including one sloped portion for each lifting arm, with the top surface of each sloped portion downwardly inclined from the central axis and proximate to the bottom of each lifting arm horizontal portion proximate to the central axis; and

vertical posts for lifting the lifting assembly mounted to the top of the exertion member, with one vertical post mounted to each sloped portion of the exertion member and extending through and slidably disposed in a corresponding slot in the horizontal portion of each lifting arm; and

second load bearing means mounted to the vertical posts and adapted to receive lifting means,

wherein when upward force is applied to the first load bearing means, the grippers are in retracted position, and

wherein when upward force is applied to the second load bearing means, the sloped top surfaces of the exertion member apply force to the lifting arms to cause the horizontal portion central end of each lifting arm to move upward and radially outward, causing the upper end of each vertical portion to move outward, rotating each vertical portion around the fulcrum and actuating the grippers to be in the engaged position.

Claim 19 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the outside edge of the base is circular in the horizontal plane.

Claim 20 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the base comprises connected linear members.

Claim 21 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the outside edge of the ring is circular in the horizontal plane.

Claim 22 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the ring comprises connected linear members.

Claim 23 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the first load bearing means comprises:

at least two vertical members mounted to the frame at their lower ends and on opposite sides of the frame;

a horizontal member mounted to the upper ends of the vertical members; and

a lifting eye mounted to the horizontal member.

Claim 24 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein the second load bearing means comprises a lifting eye mounted to horizontal parts that are mounted to the upper ends of at least two vertical posts.

Claim 25 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, further comprising guide members mounted to the frame for aligning the frame on the cylinder.

Claim 26 (currently amended): ~~A lifter as recited in~~ The lifting apparatus of claim 18, wherein there are at least three lifting arms, at least three vertical posts, and at least three grippers.

Claim 27 (currently amended): A method of making a lifting apparatus comprising:

assembling a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including parts including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame, wherein the parts are substantially fixed relative to each other;

mounting first load bearing means to the frame;

pivotally mounting a lifting arm to each fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum, wherein the lower end of each lifting arm is adapted not to contact the article in a retracted position and to contact the article in an engaged position; [[and]]

providing a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member to rotate each lifting arm around the corresponding fulcrum from the retracted position to the engaged position, wherein in the absence of the application of external force to the exertion member the lifting arms are in the retracted position; and

mounting second load bearing means to the exertion member.

Claim 28 (previously presented): A method of making a lifting apparatus comprising:

assembling a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

pivotally mounting a lifting arm to each fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum, wherein the lower end of each lifting arm is adapted not to contact the article in a retracted position and to contact the article in an engaged position and each lifting arm has an approximately vertical portion outside of the frame and an approximately horizontal portion extending outward from the exertion member and mounted to the upper end of the respective vertical portions, the horizontal portion having a vertical slot therethrough;

providing a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member to rotate each lifting arm around the corresponding fulcrum from the retracted position to the engaged position;

extending a vertical post through each vertical slot in the horizontal portions of the lifting arms;

mounting the vertical posts to the exertion member top surface;

mounting first load bearing means to the vertical posts; and

mounting second load bearing means to the frame.

Claim 29 (original): A method of lifting an article comprising:

providing a lifting apparatus disposable on an article to be lifted, the: lifting apparatus including:

a frame including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

first load bearing means mounted to the frame;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum, wherein the lower end of each lifting arm is adapted not to contact the article in a retracted position and to contact the article in an engaged position;

a central exertion member including a top surface including one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member; and

second load bearing means mounted to the exertion member;
applying upward force to the first load bearing means to lift the lifting apparatus;
placing the lifting apparatus into position on the article;
releasing the first load bearing means;

applying upward force to the second load bearing means to cause the exertion member to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms to cause each lifting arm to rotate around the corresponding fulcrum from the retracted position to the engaged position; and

applying increased upward force to the second load bearing means to lift the lifting apparatus and the article.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including parts including a lower ring disposable on the article with at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around and mounted to the lower ring frame, an upper ring spaced from the lower ring and generally in a plane parallel to the plane in which the lower ring is oriented, and vertical members each having a lower end mounted to the lower ring and an upper end mounted to the upper ring, wherein the parts are substantially fixed relative to each other;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum; and

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The lifting apparatus of claim 30, wherein the lower end of each lifting arm is adapted not to contact the article in a retracted position and to contact the article in an engaged position, wherein in the absence of the application of external force to the

exertion member the lifting arms are in the retracted position, and wherein upon application of upward force to the exertion member the lifting arms rotate around the corresponding fulcrum from the retracted position to the engaged position.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The lifting apparatus of claim 30, wherein the exertion member engages the upper ends of the lifting arms in a manner selected from the group consisting of sliding engagement and rolling engagement.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The lifting apparatus of claim 30, wherein the at least two lifting arms each comprise an approximately vertical portion outside of the frame mounted to an approximately horizontal portion extending outward from the exertion member to the upper end of the respective vertical portions, the lifting arms have various positions, and the approximately vertical portion remains approximately vertical and the approximately horizontal portion remains approximately horizontal throughout the various positions.

Claim 34 (currently amended): The lifting apparatus of claim 30, further comprising [[first]] load bearing means mounted to the frame and adapted to receive lifting means.

Claim 35 (previously presented): A lifting apparatus comprising:

a frame disposable on an article to be lifted and including at least two fulcrums distributed generally symmetrically around the frame;

at least two lifting arms each pivotally mounted to a corresponding fulcrum, each lifting arm having a lower end extending lower than the fulcrum and an upper end extending above the fulcrum;

a central exertion member including a top surface having one sloped portion for each lifting arm, the top surface of each sloped portion being downwardly inclined from the center of the exertion member and below the upper ends of the respective lifting arms to apply force to the upper ends of the lifting arms upon application of upward force to the exertion member; and

load bearing means mounted to the frame and adapted to receive lifting means, wherein the first load bearing means comprises:

at least two vertical members mounted to the frame at their lower ends and on opposite sides of the frame; and

a horizontal member mounted to the upper ends of the vertical members.